



**Community-Guided Planning for
Aroostook County: Workshop One**

Report to the Land Use Planning Commission
from
Planning Decisions, Inc. and LandForms

Submitted May 13, 2013

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I. WORKSHOP MINUTES

**Pre-Planning for Aroostook County Prospective Zoning
Workshop 1 Meeting Minutes
8:30 am – 12:30 pm; April 24, 2013**

Conveners: Land Use Planning Commission and Northern Maine Development Corporation

Mike Eisensmith (for Robert Clark), NMDC

Jay Kamm, NMDC

Samantha Horn Olsen; Planning Manager, LUPC

Hugh Coxe; Senior Planner, LUPC

Billie MacLean, LUPC

Facilitator: Frank O'Hara, Planning Decisions

Recorder: Alison Truesdale, LandForms

Steering Committee members in attendance:

1. Paul Bernier (for Doug Beaulieu), Aroostook County Commission
2. David Cambridge, Katahdin Trust
3. Ked Coffin, Irving Woodlands
4. Fred Corey, Aroostook Band of Micmacs
5. Mark Draper, Tri-Community Land Fill
6. Ralph Dwyer, Ashland Town Manager
7. Sarah Medina, Seven Islands
8. Cheryl St. Peter, Fish River Lakes Leaseholders Association (also works at County Environmental Engineering, Inc.)
9. Tom Rumpf (for Bill Patterson), The Nature Conservancy

Other attendees:

1. Tom Clowes, NMDC Executive Board
2. Durward Humphrey, Commissioner, LUPC
3. James May, Commissioner, LUPC
4. Paul Underwood, Commissioner, LUPC
5. Steve Schley, Pingree Associates
6. Carl Sjogren, Prentiss & Carlisle
7. Elgin H. Turner, H.C. Haynes, Inc.

Agenda

Arrival

Welcome and Introductions;

Review agenda

Legislative background; LUPC process thus far

Review of prospective planning process

Opportunities and risks of regional planning for Aroostook

Q & A

Break

Discussion: what are the important elements of a process that will create a successful plan for the Aroostook region?

Tentative dates and agenda for workshop #2

OPPORTUNITIES

- Establish/protect wildlife habitat connectivity to Gaspe Peninsula
- Enfranchise local representatives
- Predictability for developers
- Revitalization; job growth
- Having a say in one's destiny
- Information
- Logical use of natural resources
- Special places conserved
- Economics: developing the "gateway to the Big Woods", without damage to the land
- Provide direction to economic development efforts
- Preserving traditional values, public access, economy, way of life
- Mining proposal
- More collaboration (e.g., trail and connections) among landowners, groups, LUPC
- Improve consistency between regulation of organized and unorganized areas
- Economic viability
 - Forest products
 - Fractured ownership
- Recreation activities
- Keep camp leases
- Seasonal camps on already-developed lakes
- Being open to new ideas
 - (e.g., using UT land for septic disposal of organic waste)
- Thinking across traditional boundaries (UT/organized; US/Canada)
- Taking advantage of opportunities that arise from greater communication, cooperation
- Setting a tone that invites development to Aroostook as long as the resources are not compromised
- Learning together; having a conscious conversation

RISKS/CONCERNS

- Accountability of elected officials (be careful with exceptions)
- Public perception
 - e.g., that we are "loosening standards"
- Failure; making things worse

- Not seeing every possibility
- Complexity; creating another bureaucracy
- Not enough resources
- Getting mired in conflict
- Communication (need to find out what residents are concerned about)
- Broad consensus not achieved
- Poor process
- Facilitation not honest (doesn't feel fair or safe)
- Plan sits on a shelf, isn't useful
- Plan isn't balanced
- Lack of information
- Fear of criticism

DISCUSSION: IDEAS FOR THE PLANNING EFFORT

Steering Committee (for planning effort):

- Establish Committee membership nomination/selection process. Recognize people's time limitations
- 10-12 members
 - avoid "blockers"
- Chair
 - should be widely respected
 - communicates with NMDC
 - provides leadership to committee
 - NMDC nominates, committee approves
- Create committee subgroups dedicated to specific topics
- Define stakeholders and their roles in the process
- Have meetings monthly in a central location
 - Use a video link if necessary

Communication with outside groups and individuals

- Committee members can make effort to reach out to individuals
 - use memberships, regional representatives for outreach
- LUPC and NMDC will coordinate communication with tribal government
 - Tribes need to consult government-to-government
- Public comment time not necessary at all meetings, but otherwise appropriate
 - Have larger public meetings and smaller focus groups (e.g., for landowner issues, recreation planning)
 - Steering Committee can invite specific interests to present information to subcommittees
- Use public hearing process at key points:
 1. Initial information/ideas gathering
 2. Decision points

3. Final product

- Use the press
- Use web sites, social media, person-to-person outreach
- Put informational flyers in tax bills for seasonal residents?
- Committee should approve minutes prior to meetings and prior to public dissemination
 - drafts still subject to FOIA
 - minutes should only include decisions, key points; next steps
- Recorder and facilitator should be separate people

Decision-making

- Consensus decision-making – or –
- Use modified consensus process
 - Establish a conflict resolution process
 - For example, chair has discretion to resolve blocks; or use “stand aside” process
 - A consensus document is desirable for LUPC approval
- Have independent facilitation
 - Have a transparent process
 - Be clear about who’s managing the process
- Agree on the facts before discussing policy/planning issues
- Involve different perspectives
 - business
 - environment
 - landowners
 - residents

Planning Process

- Share information from past plans/studies
 - Examine the time horizons of past plans and take them into consideration
- Invite key groups to present their expertise at a meeting
- Identify information gaps
- Look across geo-political boundaries
 - road system, paper plant, electric power lines – all located outside the County, but have direct effects within the County
- Create a map of conserved areas that shows different types of protection
 - Use the GIS layers being developed by the state
- When and how should process/plan be amended?
 - Committee recommends and votes on amendment; NMDC board approval?
- Plan should be:
 - streamlined
 - easy to understand
 - easy to implement
 - goals and messages should be clear

Plan Approval Process

- Process should address authority of this committee relative to NMDC board, County Commissioners
 - NMDC board as checkpoint?
 - Steering Committee?
- NMDC presents plan to LUPC and public

NEXT STEPS

Tentative Dates and Agenda for Future Workshops

Workshop #2: May 15

Based on Workshop #1 discussion, the facilitators will create a “straw man” proposal for an Aroostook community-guided planning process and mail it to committee members prior to Workshop #2.

NMDC will try to find a small woodlot owner to serve on the pre-planning committee.

Agenda:

- Review, reshape, elaborate on, add detail to, and sharpen the straw-man proposal.

Workshop #3: June 4 (or by email)

Agenda:

- Finalize and approve a document or agreement that sets out, for the land use planning phase, the committee structure and decision-making process.

II. POWERPOINT PRESENTATION



COMMUNITY GUIDED PLANNING PROCESS

AROOSTOOK COUNTY
APRIL 24, 2013



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- **Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC):**

- Mike Eisensmith, Director of Regional Planning
- Jay Kamm, Senior Planner

- **Land Use Planning Commission staff:**

- Samantha Horn Olsen, Planning Manager
- Hugh Coxe, Senior Planner
- Billie MacLean, Regional Representative

- **Facilitators:**

- Frank O'Hara, Planning Decisions
- Alison Truesdale, LandForms



AGENDA

Why we are here?
Where are we going
with this?

How
do we
get
there?

Issues
for
focus

Prep for
next
meeting



WHY ARE WE HERE?

LD 1798, *An Act To Reform Land Use Planning in the Unorganized Territory*

Directed the LUPC to:

- initiate prospective zoning,
- allocate staff time to the task,
- coordinate prospective zoning with local and regional planning efforts, and
- report to the legislature.



COMMUNITY GUIDED PLANNING: THE LARGER PROCESS

1

- Pre-planning

2

- Planning

3

- Plan Approval

4

- Plan Implementation



2. WHAT KIND OF OUTCOME? (WHERE ARE WE GOING?)

Examples:

- Future Land Use Plan
- Resource Plan
 - Recreation Plan
 - Open Space Plan
- Transportation Plan
- Rezoning
- Revised land use standards



ADVANTAGES OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY-GUIDED PLANNING IN AROOSTOOK COUNTY

Other planning efforts currently underway in Aroostook County with NMDC participation/leadership:

- EDA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Regional transportation strategy
- Scenic and cultural byway corridors
- Community planning assistance
- Grant programs from USDA, EDA, EPA, USDOL, MEDOL, NIST, MEP, DOD, MeDACF
- Mobilize Northern Maine
- Grow Washington-Aroostook (Gro-WA) Strategic Planning



3. PLAN APPROVAL

- **LUPC approval:**
 - Locally driven process
 - Broad participation
 - Equitable treatment of property owners
 - Balance of regional uniqueness with consistency in regulatory structure and predictability for property owners
 - Consistent with LUPC's statutory purpose and scope

- **Local approval?**
 - TBD



4. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Ingredients for success:

- Achievable within a set timeframe
- Achievable on a set budget
- Assigns clear directives to accountable parties
- Includes measures of success



1. PRE-PLANNING

- The 3 meeting format
- Steering Committee
 - Membership
 - Role of Committee
- Product of pre-planning effort
 - Process document



THE FIRST CUT

NMDC and LUPC staff agreed that, for this meeting, representatives of 12 interests should make up the committee.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. County rep | 7. Agriculture rep |
| 2. Town rep | 8. Environmental group rep |
| 3. Service provider | 9. Recreation industry rep |
| 4. Business owner | 10. Indian tribes |
| 5. Large landowners | 11. permanent resident camp owner |
| 6. small landowner (such as woodlot owner) | |

QUESTIONS?

Everybody clear on what we're doing here?

Clear about where the Unorganized Territory is?

10-15 MINUTE BREAK



WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?



EVALUATE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES



PLANNING PROCESS REQUIREMENTS



NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- Based on discussion today, staff will create a “straw man” proposal for an Aroostook community-guided planning process and mail it prior to meeting
- Agenda will be to review, reshape, elaborate, add detail, and sharpen the proposal
- Who plans to come to the next workshop?
- Who else needs to be here that isn't here today? Small woodlot owner



COMMENTS

- Public
- Committee members
- LUPC staff
- NMDC

III. HANDOUTS

COMMUNITY-GUIDED PLANNING AND ZONING for REGIONS WITHIN MAINE'S UNORGANIZED TERRITORIES

Overarching Principles

The Commission has adopted the following principles to guide any community-guided planning and zoning effort:

1. The process must be locally desired and driven;
2. The process must allow for broad participation by all with an interest in the region;
3. The resulting zoning must address property owner equity through consideration of the distribution of development subdistricts both geographically and across large land holdings within a single ownership;
4. Taken together, all community-guided planning and zoning efforts must balance regional uniqueness with jurisdiction-wide consistency in regulatory structure and predictability for property owners; and
5. Any plan and zoning proposed must be consistent with the LUPC's statutory purpose and scope and rezoning criteria¹.

Participation

A successful community-guided planning and zoning effort will provide opportunities for a broad spectrum of residents, property owners, and interested parties to participate, as well as allow for respectful consideration of divergent views.

The Commission will encourage a coordinated effort involving multiple organizations and interests and believes the minimum participants for a valid process are:

- Property owners – residents, individuals, families, seasonal owners, lessees, trusts, corporate owners
- County commissioners and officials
- Regional planning and economic development organizations
- Neighboring organized towns and service centers
- Service providers (road owners, solid waste disposal, emergency services, utility)
- LUPC (see *Commission Involvement and Review* below)

Other interests should also be allowed to weigh in, including but not limited to:

- State agencies (DAFC, MDOT, MDIF&W, DECD)

¹ 12 M.R.S. §§ 685-A(8-A). Criteria for adoption or amendment of land use district boundaries.

- Chambers of Commerce
- Environmental organizations
- Citizens from other locations in Maine
- Industry organizations

Prospective Zones Are Different

Prospective Zoning is different from the Commission's usual approach. It establishes districts large enough to accommodate all anticipated growth in a region within a certain time period rather than designating districts on a case-by-case basis to make room for particular development projects.

With some exceptions², the current process works like this -- when a landowner wants a permit for anything more intensive than a single-family home or home occupation within a Management or Protection Subdistrict, he or she must first file a petition to rezone the property to a Development Subdistrict. Under this project-by-project approach, development zones are dispersed somewhat randomly. While new zones must be located within a mile of a similar zone, what the Commission calls "adjacency," development can leapfrog and spread ever outward. In contrast, prospective zoning provides explicit and reasonable boundaries to meet the development needs of a region within the next 20 years.

² Exceptions include Lake Concept Plans, Resource Plans, and zoning for Greenfield and Madrid.

IV. WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Pre-Planning Steering Committee					
Seat	Representative	Alternate	Affiliation	Location	Workshop 1 Attendance
County representative	Doug Beaulieu	Paul Bernier	County	Caribou	Paul Bernier
	David Cambridge		Katahdin Trust		x
Large land owner	Ked Coffin		Irving Woodlands	Countywide	x
Tribal representative	Fred Corey		Aroostook Band of Micmacs	Presque Isle	x
Service Provider	Mark Draper		Tri-Community Land Fill		x
Municipal representative	Ralph Dwyer		Ashland Town Manager	Ashland	x
Large land owner	Sarah Medina		Seven Islands	Countywide	x
Environmental organization	Bill Patterson	Tom Rumpf	The Nature Conservancy	Countywide	Tom Rumpf
Permanent UT resident/homeowner/leaseholder	Cheryl St. Peter		Fish River Lakes Assoc.		x
Staff/Conveners					
	Name	Alternate	Affiliation		Workshop 1 Attendance
	Jay Kamm		NMDC		x
	Robert Clark	Mike Eisensmith	NMDC		Mike Eisensmith
	Samantha Horn Olsen		LUPC		x
	Hugh Coxe		LUPC		x
	Billie MacLean		LUPC		x
Members of the Public					
	Name		Affiliation		Workshop 1 Attendance
	Tom Clowes		NMDC Board		x
	Durward Humphrey, Commissioner		LUPC		x
	James May, Commissioner		LUPC		x
	Steve Schley		Pingree Associates		x

	Carl Sjogren		Prentiss & Carlisle		x
	Elgin H. Turner		H.C. Haynes, Inc.		x
	Paul Underwood, Commissioner		LUPC		x

V. STRAW MAN PROPOSAL

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR AROOSTOOK COMMUNITY-GUIDED PLANNING PROCESS

May 8, 2013

<u>Proposed Structure</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1) Goals for process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Transparent b) Clear roles c) Involve all perspectives d) Simple, understandable results e) Actionable results f) As much consensus as is possible 	<p><i>From the meeting of April 24</i></p>
2) Committee structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Standing committee of the NMDC Executive Board b) Appointed by the NMDC Executive Board c) Advisory to the NMDC Executive Board d) No more than 15 e) Broad membership covering the same groups as the pre-planning committee, including at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County representative • Municipal representative • Service provider • Business owner • Two large landowners • Small landowner (such as woodlot owner) • Agricultural representative • Environmental group representative • Recreation industry representative • Native American tribes • Permanent resident camp owner f) Chair appointed by group (should be widely respected, with no ax to grind, lend credibility to the effort among the public) g) Monthly meetings, video link available 	
3) “Modified Consensus” decision-making procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) For all issues before the committee, the Chair should initially seek a consensus decision b) If impossible, ask if those who disagree would “step aside” to allow decision to go forward c) If just one decides not to step aside, the chair can 	<p><i>Consensus of all parties will make the group recommendation much stronger when it reaches the LUPC approval level.</i></p> <p><i>The suggestion here is a preference for</i></p>

<p>override and allow decision to stand</p>	<p><i>consensus, but when impossible, allows decision to go ahead if only one objects. This could be increased to two or three.</i></p> <p><i>See Appendix for a detailed discussion of alternative consensus procedures.</i></p>
<p>4) Public Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Goal: provide opportunities for a broad spectrum of residents, property owners, and interested parties to participate, as well as to allow for a respectful consideration of divergent views. b) Key points for public input: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of process – brainstorm of ideas and concerns • Middle – key decision points, such as how to focus recommendation • End – comment on final draft recommendation c) Public comment period available during some meetings d) Use a mix of input methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-on-one interviews • focus groups • open public workshops • open public hearings e) Allow submission of written comments at any point f) Have up-to-date web site with all committee documents, minutes, etc. g) Use media to publicize events 	<p><i>Details of public participation will have to be worked out as the process goes on. The important thing is that there should be mechanisms for public participation at all points in the process, but especially at key transition and decision-making times.</i></p>
<p>5) Coordination with tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) LUPC representatives, along with NMDC staff, consult with the two tribal governments at key points in the planning process b) Tribes invited to participate on planning committee c) LUPC staff keep tribal governments informed on an ongoing basis 	

6) Roles of key groups

a) NMDC Executive Board

- Ensures that planning process meets the standards agreed to in this document
- Appoints committee members
- NMDC staff will be responsible for data and research
- Approves final report and recommendations and forwards to the LUPC

b) Planning Committee

- Appointed by the NMDC Executive Board
- Advisory to the NMDC Executive Board
- May form subcommittees for research purposes; such subcommittees must include at least one committee member, and may include non-committee members
- Approves the draft final report and recommendations and forwards them to the NMDC Executive Board for action
- Committee submits its final report to NMDC Executive board for approval and submission to the LUPC

c) LUPC

- Staff attend committee meetings, provide technical assistance as needed
- Staff and Commission provide input during the planning process with regard to specific ideas and procedures, and their consistency with the LUPC's Overarching Principles for Community Guided Planning, the LUPC's statutory purpose and scope, and the LUPC's rezoning criteria
- The LUPC receives final report, approves or disapproves, and acts upon approved recommendations

d) County commissioners

- Have representative on committee

<p>7) The planning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Uses an “asset-based” approach b) Relies largely on information from past studies, with limited original research c) Uses GIS maps for analysis d) Gets consensus buy-in on all facts – no “competing facts” arguments e) Looks across geopolitical boundaries within Aroostook County f) Two phases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – Identify area of focus for recommendations • Phase 2 – Research and prepare detailed recommendation 	<p><i>“Asset-based” is a type of planning that starts with assets and opportunities, and seeks to build upon them; rather than starting from needs, and trying to fix them. NMDC has successful experience in asset-based planning through the Mobilize ME process.</i></p>
<p>8) Approval of Community Guided planning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) NMDC Executive Board shall approve the process as described in this document for the Community Guided Planning and shall submit the proposed process to the LUPC for its review and approval b) The LUPC shall review the process and approve, or send back to the NMDC board for further work c) Once approved by the LUPC, the work can begin. 	
<p>9) Amendments to the planning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) If the committee wants to amend the process as described in this document over the course of the community-guided planning, it must submit its request to the NMDC Executive Board b) The NMDC Executive Board shall request input from the LUPC staff about whether the proposed changes are consistent with the LUPC’s Overarching Principles. c) The LUPC staff shall review the proposed changes and, if it determines the proposed changes are substantial and could affect the outcome or integrity of the planning process, may bring the issue to the full LUPC Commission for a determination of whether the proposed change is consistent with LUPC’s Overarching Principles. d) Following input from the LUPC staff and/or Commission, the NMDC Executive Board will act upon the committee’s request. 	<p><i>In the event that the LUPC determines that the proposed change is not consistent with LUPC’s Overarching Principles and are substantial and could affect the outcome or integrity of the planning process, the Commission would have the option to withdraw its support for, and participation with, the project.</i></p>

Appendix: Discussion of Consensus procedures and options from Wikipedia

(See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus_decision-making)

Decision rules

The level of agreement necessary to finalize a decision is known as a decision rule. Possible decision rules for consensus vary within the following range:

- Unanimous agreement
- Unanimous consent (See agreement vs. consent below)
- Unanimous agreement minus one vote or two votes
- Unanimous consent minus one vote or two votes
- Super majority thresholds (90%, 80%, 75%, two-thirds, and 60% are common).
- Simple Majority
- Executive committee decides
- Person-in-charge decides

In groups that require unanimous agreement or consent (unanimity) to approve group decisions, if any participant objects, they can block consensus according to the guidelines described below. These groups use the term consensus to denote both the discussion process and the decision rule. Other groups use a consensus process to generate as much agreement as possible, but allow decisions to be finalized with a decision rule that does not require unanimity. In this case, someone who has a 'block' or strong objection will still have to live with the decision made.

Agreement vs. consent

Giving consent does not necessarily mean that the proposal being considered is one's first choice. Group members can vote their consent to a proposal because they choose to cooperate with the direction of the group, rather than insist on their personal preference. Sometimes the vote on a proposal is framed, "Is this proposal something you can live with?" This relaxed threshold for a yes vote can achieve full consent. This full consent, however, does not mean that everyone is in full agreement. Consent must be 'genuine and cannot be obtained by force, duress or fraud' ^[17]

Near-Unanimous Consensus

Healthy consensus decision-making processes usually encourage and out dissent early, maximizing the chance of accommodating the views of all minorities. Since unanimity may be difficult to achieve, especially in large groups, or unanimity may be the result of coercion, fear, undue persuasive power or eloquence, inability to comprehend alternatives, or plain impatience with the process of debate, consensus decision making bodies may use an alternative benchmark of consensus. These include the following:

- **Unanimity minus one** (or U-1), requires all delegates but one to support the decision. The individual dissenter cannot block the decision although he or she may be able to prolong debate (e.g. via a filibuster). The dissenter may be the ongoing monitor of the implications of the decision, and their opinion of the outcome of the decision may be

solicited at some future time. Betting markets in particular rely on the input of such lone dissenters. A lone bettor against the odds profits when his or her prediction of the outcomes proves to be better than that of the majority. This disciplines the market's odds.

- **Unanimity minus two** (or U-2), does not permit two individual delegates to block a decision and tends to curtail debate with a lone dissenter more quickly. Dissenting *pairs* can present alternate views of what is wrong with the decision under consideration. Pairs of delegates can be empowered to find the common ground that will enable them to convince a third, decision-blocking, decision-maker to join them. If the pair are unable to convince a third party to join them, typically within a set time, their arguments are deemed to be unconvincing.
- **Unanimity minus three**, (or U-3), and other such systems recognize the ability of four or more delegates to actively block a decision. U-3 and lesser degrees of unanimity are usually lumped in with statistical measures of agreement, such as: 80%, mean plus one sigma, two-thirds, or majority levels of agreement. Such measures usually do not fit within the definition of consensus.
- **Rough Consensus** is a process with no specific rule for "how much is enough." Rather, the question of consensus is left to the judgment of the group chair, this makes it more difficult for a small number of disruptors to block a decision, it puts increased responsibility on the chair, and may lead to divisive debates about whether rough consensus has in fact been correctly identified.

Dissent options

When a participant does not support a proposal, he does not necessarily need to block it. When a call for consensus on a motion is made, a dissenting delegate has one of three options:

- **Declare reservations:** Group members who are willing to let a motion pass but desire to register their concerns with the group may choose "declare reservations." If there are significant reservations about a motion, the decision-making body may choose to modify or re-word the proposal.
- **Stand aside:** A "stand aside" may be registered by a group member who has a "serious personal disagreement" with a proposal, but is willing to let the motion pass. Although stand asides do not halt a motion, it is often regarded as a strong "nay vote" and the concerns of group members standing aside are usually addressed by modifications to the proposal. Stand asides may also be registered by users who feel they are incapable of adequately understanding or participating in the proposal.
- **Block:** Any group member may "block" a proposal. In most models, a single block is sufficient to stop a proposal, although some measures of consensus may require more than one block (*see previous section, "Decision rules"*). Blocks are generally considered to be an extreme measure, only used when a member feels a proposal "endanger[s] the organization or its participants, or violate[s] the mission of the organization" (i.e., a principled objection). In some consensus models, a group member opposing a proposal must work with its proponents to find a solution that will work for everyone.

Consensus Process

There are multiple stepwise models of how to make decisions by consensus. They vary in the amount of detail the steps describe. They also vary depending on how decisions are finalized. The basic model involves

- collaboratively generating a proposal,
- identifying unsatisfied concerns, and then
- modifying the proposal to generate as much agreement as possible.

After a concerted attempt at generating full agreement, the group can then apply its final decision rule to determine if the existing level of agreement is sufficient to finalize a decision.

Specific models

Consensus decision-making with consensus blocking

Groups that require unanimity commonly use a core set of procedures depicted in this flow chart.

Once an agenda for discussion has been set and, optionally, the ground rules for the meeting have been agreed upon, each item of the agenda is addressed in turn. Typically, each decision arising from an agenda item follows through a simple structure:

- **Discussion of the item:** The item is discussed with the goal of identifying opinions and information on the topic at hand. The general direction of the group and potential proposals for action are often identified during the discussion.
- **Formation of a proposal:** Based on the discussion a formal decision proposal on the issue is presented to the group.
- **Call for consensus:** The facilitator of the decision-making body calls for consensus on the proposal. Each member of the group usually must actively state their agreement with the proposal, often by using a hand gesture or raising a colored card, to avoid the group interpreting silence or inaction as agreement. The number of blocks is counted to determine if this step's consent threshold is satisfied. If it is, dissenters will be asked to collaborate on a minority position or statement so that any unique or shared concerns with proceeding with the agreement, or any harms, can be addressed/minimized. *This can happen even if the consent threshold is unanimity, especially if many voters stand aside.*
- **Identification and addressing of concerns:** If consensus is not achieved, each dissenter presents his or her concerns on the proposal, potentially starting another round of discussion to address or clarify the concern.
- **Modification of the proposal:** The proposal is amended, re-phrased or ridered in an attempt to address the concerns of the decision-makers. The process then returns to the call for consensus and the cycle is repeated until a satisfactory decision passes the consent threshold for the group.

